



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **2 SENTENCED, 2 PLEAD GUILTY IN MICHIGAN DRIVER'S LICENSE FRAUD SCHEME**

DETROIT — Two Detroit-area residents were sentenced, and two former employees of the Michigan Secretary of State pleaded guilty, on Wednesday for their involvement in a Michigan driver's license fraud scheme, announced U.S. Attorney Stephen J. Murphy, Eastern District of Michigan, and Brian M. Moskowitz, special agent-in-charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Ali Hawil, 35, a citizen of Guinea, and Daher Sarhan Al-Mayahi, 37, a citizen of Iran, who both reside in Dearborn, Mich., were sentenced by U.S. District Judge Arthur J. Tarnow, after pleading guilty to one count each of Conspiracy to Commit Document Fraud and Visa Fraud on July 14. On Dec. 14, Hawil was sentenced to 15 months imprisonment and Al-Mayahi received 12 months minus one day.

ICE special agents presented information to the court at the time of their guilty pleas that showed between Nov. 10, 2003 and April 28, 2005, Daher Al-Mayahi, Ali Hawil and others, including Barbara Wilke of the Michigan Secretary of State, conspired to possess hundreds of false, counterfeit and fraudulently obtained passports, visas, birth certificates, and driver's licenses within the Detroit Metropolitan area. The documents were unlawfully used by both men, and in some instances, they illegally transferred the documents to others, including to illegal aliens already present within the United States. Both men also possessed counterfeit Guinean passports and counterfeit U.S. visas bearing their likeness, with an alias.

In a related ICE investigation, Barbara Wilkey, 56, of West Bloomfield, pleaded guilty Wednesday before Judge Arthur J. Tarnow for her part in the conspiracy involving Al-Mayahi and Hawil. Wilkey admitted that while working as a clerk at the New Center branch of the Secretary of State, 3046 West Grand Blvd., Detroit, Mich., she engaged in a fraudulent identification document scheme with Al-Mayahi, Hawil, and others. In exchange for payments made by the customers of Al-Mayahi and Hawil, Wilkey provided the customers with identification documents without lawful authority. As a member of the scheme, Wilkey received regular payments from Al-Mayahi and Hawil in the form of cash, entertainment and repayment of gambling debts.

Regjean Welch, 26, a former employee of the Michigan Secretary of State's office, also pleaded guilty to a separate conspiracy to issue fraudulent driver's licenses and identification documents. Welch admitted that during her employment at the Secretary of State's Livonia West Branch Office, 19229 Newburgh Rd., Livonia, Mich., she issued operator's licenses and personal identification cards to individuals with aliases for a fee ranging from \$100 to \$500, which was given to her co-conspirator. Individuals were directed to Welch's branch office by her co-conspirator, where they would approach Welch's counter for her to process their requests for alias identification documents without requiring them to produce valid proof of their identities.

Normally, an applicant for a Michigan operator's license or personal identification card must prove his or her identity and residence by presenting certain specified documents to a Secretary of State clerk, such as the applicant's birth certificate, passport or utility bills. To obtain an operator's license, the applicant must also pass knowledge and road skills test, complete practice on a temporary instruction permit and pay a \$25 fee.

Wilke and Welch are scheduled for sentencing on March 30 and May 1, 2006, respectively.

The statutory maximum penalties for this offense are five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, or both. Pursuant to the plea agreement, Wilkey and Welch's sentencing ranges are six to 16 months' imprisonment.

"This case underscores the seriousness with which my office and the Department of Homeland Security view the possession and issuance of fraudulent identity documents. Those documents can then be used to facilitate the movement of illegal aliens, criminals and terrorists throughout our country," said U.S. Attorney Murphy.

"Today's actions send a clear message that we will not tolerate the use of fraudulent driver licenses and other fabricated government documents," said Brian M. Moskowitz, special agent-in-charge, ICE Detroit Office of Investigations. "We will continue to apply all resources available to stop individuals from abusing our system."

In announcing the sentences and pleas, U.S. Attorney Stephen J. Murphy, commended the work of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement along with the FBI, Department of Transportation, Office of Inspector General, and the Michigan Department of State, Investigations Division and the Michigan State Police, who conducted a "diligent and thorough" investigation.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Kenneth R. Chadwell prosecuted the case.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*